

American people won't find this acceptable either.

So I respectfully invite each of my colleagues, Republican and Democrats alike, and even those of you who have been in Washington for a while, to join us for this moment of bipartisanship and work together on behalf of our fellow citizens. Let's remember that it is a privilege to serve the American people. It's time to get to work.

UPHOLDING SECTION 5 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VEASEY. As oral arguments are being prepared for the February 27 U.S. Supreme Court hearing in the case of *Shelby County v. Holder*, which challenges the constitutionality of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, I stand here today in strong support of upholding section 5 as evidence of its current critical necessity. In my home State of Texas, the need for section 5 of the Voting Rights Act is playing out in a very dramatic fashion.

I'm a plaintiff in the ongoing litigation involving the 2011 Texas redistricting case, *Quesada v. The State of Texas*. I can personally attest and flatly state that overt and deliberate racial discrimination is still used by leaders in Texas today. I wish that statement were untrue or out of date. It would be wonderful to say that we have progressed past the need for protection under section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Sadly, this is not the case. Section 5 protects minorities from racial discriminatory voter ID laws, voter suppression tactics, and discriminatory redistricting plans. These protections are needed now as much as ever.

In 2011, just 2 years ago, a map was drawn by the Texas Legislature that didn't merely affect the politics of our State. Overt racial discriminatory tactics were used to isolate and suppress hundreds of thousands of minorities for the purpose of political gain by current partisan leaders of my State. Latino and African American citizens in the State of Texas suffered the most aggressive and deliberate discriminatory blows to our constitutional rights to fairly participate in elections.

Cold and heartless tactics were used that should be simply relics of the past—relics like “packing” millions of minority voters together into as few districts as people to dilute the impact of their vote by “cracking” the remaining voters to ensure that their vote has no impact at all. Minorities were packed precinct by precinct and block by block in order to contain the impact of their growing population. And yet here we are today, fighting to uphold section 5.

The right to vote and the right for one's voice to be heard through elected representation is a legally enacted and constitutional right that many have

bled and died for. Yet we are still fighting for this very right. Some say its time to move on. But, my dear friends, we must never move on while these rights are not just at risk but under attack. And when I detail the discrimination contained within the redistricting process, no one should think I'm acting as a partisan Democrat. The three-judge panel in Federal court that heard the evidence, questioned the witnesses, and delivered the opinion of the Texas redistricting case consisted of two judges appointed by Republican Presidents and one judge appointed by a Democratic President. Their finding of intentional discrimination was unanimous. They could not have made their views any clearer, stating:

The parties have provided more evidence of discriminatory intent than we have space or need to address here.

This was not a case heard 30 years ago, or even 10 or 5 years ago. The decision was released just last August, barely 6 months ago.

Lastly, those who tell you that there is no recourse for States that no longer discriminate are, at best, dangerously mistaken. The Voting Rights Act contains provisions for States that have over the years exhibited that they are no longer in need of pre-clearance. States can submit evidence to the Department of Justice or the D.C. District Court that they are no longer using racial discriminatory redistricting tactics and apply for a way out of section 5. As a matter of fact, since 2009, more States than ever before in the history of the Voting Rights Act have been granted the right out.

So why are we challenging the constitutionality of a law that is protecting its citizens from racial discrimination when there is, in fact, recourse? I will tell you the sad truth is because, unfortunately, in States like Texas, where the minority population is growing very rapidly and their voting strength is increasing, rather than work to earn the vote of minority citizens, State leaders would rather suppress voters through racially discriminatory tactics.

My friends, our country is better than this. We are better than this. That's why we are here today in support of upholding section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

□ 1100

EXPANSION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, one thing that President Obama mentioned in his State of the Union speech the other night, which I hope he follows up on, is his effort to stop the cost of college tuition and fees from going up at such a rapid rate.

I spoke to a class at the University of Tennessee last week—and I've done

that many times—and whenever I speak to classes, it shocks the students when I tell them that in my first year at the University of Tennessee it cost \$90 per quarter in our tuition. In other words, I went to school for \$270. It went up to \$105, and then \$120, and then \$135 a quarter my senior year, so it went up \$405. But this was shortly after the Federal student loan program had come in.

Until that program came in, college tuition and fees went up at just the rate of inflation. It went up very slowly—in fact, sometimes less than inflation. But now, and ever since that program has come in, tuition and fees have gone up at three or four or five times the rate of inflation, so that today colleges and universities cost 300, 400, and 500 percent higher than they would have if we had just left things alone. Anything the Federal Government subsidizes, the costs just explode.

When I went to the University of Tennessee—my senior year in high school I had been a bag boy at the A&P making \$1.10 an hour—I got a big raise. As a freshman at the university, I became a salesman at Sears and worked there my first 2 years, and I made \$1.25 an hour.

Almost everybody who needed to could work part-time and pay all of their expenses and fees in college. Nobody had to borrow money to go to colleges or universities; nobody got out of school with a debt. Then the Federal Government decided to help. And now, what it has resulted in is almost everybody has to borrow money to pay their tuition and fees, and almost everybody gets out of school with some kind of huge debt.

We've seen the same thing happen in medical care. The Federal Government decided to help out. Before the Federal Government got involved in medical care, medical care was cheap and affordable to almost everybody. Doctors even made house calls. We took what was a very minor problem for a very few people and now we've turned it into a massive, major problem for everyone. That seems to be the history of the Federal Government.

I just came from a hearing in the Oversight and the Government Reform Committee, and I will return to that shortly. But in the GAO report on the New York Medicaid program—which is the largest in the country—it tells about a daily payment method resulting in a \$5,000 daily rate for institutional residents in the State of New York—\$5,000 daily payments. The New York program is paying over twice as much as the average around the country.

We sometimes hear that Medicare and Medicaid can't be cut. We certainly don't want to hurt any lower-income people, but there are some people and companies getting ridiculously, fabulously wealthy off of Medicare and Medicaid. And almost every government program ends up being some sort

of a sweetheart, insider-type deal, giving contracts to companies who hire former Federal employees. It's just scandalous what is going on in this country and it's really hurting this Nation badly—and especially hurting the middle income people that the President says he's so eager to help, but who he will be hurting worse than ever if he keeps expanding the Federal Government at the rate that he wants to.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 3 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we meditate on all the blessings of life, we especially pray for the blessing of peace in our lives and in our world. Our fervent prayer, O God, is that people will learn to live together in reconciliation and respect, so that the terrors of war and of dictatorial abuse will be no more.

As You have created each person, we pray that You guide our hearts and minds that every person of every place and background might focus on Your great gift of life and so learn to live in unity.

May Your special blessings be upon the Members of this assembly in the important, sometimes difficult, work they do. Give them wisdom and charity, that they might work together for the common good.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GARDNER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

KYLE CARPENTER, AN AMERICAN HERO

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, in February of 2009, Corporal Kyle Carpenter, a constituent and resident of Lexington, South Carolina, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and went on to complete recruit training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, South Carolina. A little over a year later, Corporal Carpenter was deployed to Marjah, Afghanistan, with his unit to carry out his service and protect our families in Operation Enduring Freedom.

On November 21, 2010, Corporal Carpenter suffered devastating injuries when an enemy hand grenade exploded while he was on post. Because of his heroic actions, Corporal Carpenter potentially saved the lives of countless others and has been decorated with a Purple Heart and awarded the Combat Action Ribbon.

I have had the privilege of visiting with Kyle, his mother, Robin, and his father, Jim. Throughout his recovery with the dedicated staff at Walter Reed in Bethesda, Kyle has served as a testament to hard work and valor. Today, Kyle is an intern serving with Chairman JEFF MILLER of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

I have no doubt that because of Corporal Carpenter's service, American families are more secure. I want to thank Kyle and the Carpenter family for your dedication to our Nation.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

LET'S ACT NOW TO GET RID OF SEQUESTRATION

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Madam Speaker, when I first came to Congress, I didn't vote for that bill that created the threat of sequestration. I thought it was a bad idea then, and I think it's a bad idea now. Automatic triggers that institute automatic cuts across the board in spending in this country are a bad idea. This manmade crisis is now threatening both our Nation's economy and our national security.

Here are just a couple of ways that that would happen. Ten percent of the FAA's workforce of 40,000 would be furloughed on any given day, resulting in reduced air traffic controllers, longer delays, and economic losses for air transportation and tourism. Fewer air traffic controllers means fewer flights, which means less tourism, and that means fewer jobs in hotels and restaurants—a ripple effect that could cripple our economy.

The Coast Guard would be cut by nearly 25 percent, jeopardizing maritime and navigation safety, the safe flow of commerce along U.S. waterways, and drastically reduce our ability to fight drug trafficking.

The clock is ticking once again. We cannot take our economy and our safety backwards at a time when the American people have worked to build it up.

Let's act now to get rid of this terrible sequestration.

INJUSTICE TO THE VILLAGE OF KING COVE, ALASKA

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, this is an injustice what the Secretary of the Interior and the Fish and Wildlife has done to a village called King Cove in Alaska. We had hearings, we had the lands transfer, we had everything going to work so these people could be safe—be safe to go to hospitals, be safe to fly out when the weather was bad. It was an agreement between the State, the Congress, and the village of King Cove. And along comes the Fish and Wildlife and denies them the trade that has to be necessary for this transportation corridor.

I'm urging my Senators to put a hold on the new Secretary of the Interior so she's not confirmed until this Secretary can, in fact, sign the law that will allow them to have safety once and for all. This process has been going on for more than 20 years. We finally got to a solution that's being stopped by this administration, the lack of knowledge about human life, who would rather protect something that does not exist.

This refuge has over 300 miles of road in it, but these people are being denied and need the safety. I'm asking Secretary Salazar, in fact, to take and do his job: overturn the Fish and Wildlife's recommendation, allow my people to be safe, and make sure they can continue to live their lives without the threat of the weather when it can be solved by an act of the Secretary.

COMMEMORATING THE 2-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF UPRISING IN BAHRAIN

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)